



OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

5 CFR Part 185

RIN 3206-AN39

Program Fraud Civil Remedies: Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule adjusts the level of civil monetary penalties contained in U.S. Office of Personnel Management regulations implementing the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, in accordance with the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 and Office of Management and Budget guidance.

DATES: Effective [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Valerie Dew, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E St NW, Washington, DC 20415, Valerie.Dew@opm.gov, (202) 606-1700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On November 2, 2015, the President signed into law the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 (Sec. 701 of Pub. L. 114-74, 28 U.S.C. 2461 note) (“the Act”). The Act required agencies to: (1) adjust the level of civil monetary penalties with an initial “catch-up” adjustment through an interim final rulemaking, and (2) make subsequent annual adjustments for inflation. The purpose of these adjustments is to maintain the deterrent effect of civil penalties. OPM has updated the agency’s monetary penalties on four occasions since the passage of the 2015 Act.

This rule takes into account adjustment for the year 2021 based on inflation for that year.

These calculations were made based on guidance contained in Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-21-10:

CFR Citation	Description of the penalty	2020 Adjusted Penalty	2021 Inflation Adjustment
5 CFR 185.103(a)	Civil Penalty for False Claims	\$11,665	\$11,803
5 CFR 185.103(f)(2)	Civil Penalty for False Statements	\$11,665	\$11,803

Finally, this rule makes an additional adjustment for the year 2022 based on inflation for that year. These calculations were made based on guidance contained in Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-22-07:

CFR Citation	Description of the penalty	2021 Adjusted Penalty	2022 Inflation Adjustment
5 CFR 185.103(a)	Civil Penalty for False Claims	\$11,803	\$12,537
5 CFR 185.103(f)(2)	Civil Penalty for False Statements	\$11,803	\$12,537

This final rule is being issued without prior public notice or opportunity for public comments. The 2015 Act's amendments to the Inflation Adjustment Act required the agency to adjust penalties initially through an interim final rulemaking, which did not require the agency to complete a notice and comment process prior to promulgating the interim final rule. The amendments also explicitly required the agency to make subsequent annual adjustments notwithstanding 5 U.S.C. 553 (the section of the Administrative Procedure Act that normally requires agencies to engage in notice and comment). The formula used for adjusting the amount of civil penalties is given by statute, with no discretion provided to OPM regarding the computation of the adjustments. OPM is charged only with performing ministerial computations to determine the amount of adjustment to the civil penalties due to increases in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

II. Calculation of Adjustment

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issues guidance annually on calculating adjustments. Under this guidance, OPM has identified applicable civil monetary penalties and calculated the annual adjustment. A civil monetary penalty is any assessment with a dollar amount that is levied for a violation of a Federal civil statute or regulation, and is assessed or enforceable through a civil action in Federal court or an administrative proceeding. A civil monetary penalty does not include a penalty levied for violation of a criminal statute, or fees for services, licenses, permits, or other regulatory review.

Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-21-10 stated that the cost-of-living multiplier for calculating adjustments in 2021 was 1.01182. OPM did not issue the final rule to implement the penalties for 2021. Therefore, the multiplier is to be applied to the 2020 level of civil monetary penalties for agencies. When OPM's 2020 penalties of \$11,665 are multiplied by 1.01182, the resulting penalty amount for 2021 is \$11,803.

Finally, Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-22-07 stated that the cost-of-living multiplier for calculating adjustments in 2022 was 1.06222. This multiplier is to be applied to the 2021 level of civil monetary penalties for agencies. When OPM's 2021 penalties of \$11,803 are multiplied by 1.06222, the resulting penalty amount is \$12,537.

III. Procedural Requirements

A. Regulatory Impact Analysis: Executive Order 12866, as Supplemented by Executive Order 13563

OPM, with the concurrence of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has determined that this is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866, as supplemented by Executive Order 13563. Therefore, no regulatory impact analysis is required.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) requires an agency to prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis for rules unless the agency certifies that the rule will not have a significant

economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The RFA applies only to rules for which an agency is required to first publish a proposed rule. See 5 U.S.C. 603(a) and 604(a). The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 requires agencies to adjust civil penalties annually. No discretion is allowed. Thus, the RFA does not apply to this final rule.

C. Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 804(2))

This rule is not a major rule under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. This rule:

- (a) Does not have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.
- (b) Will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local government agencies, or geographic regions.
- (c) Does not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

D. Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1532)

This rule does not involve a Federal mandate that may result in the expenditure by State, local and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100 million or more and that such rulemaking will not significantly or uniquely affect small governments.

E. E.O. 12630, Takings.

This rule does not have takings implications.

F. E.O. 13132, Federalism

This rule does not have federalism implications. The rule does not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the National Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

G. E.O. 12988, Civil Justice Reform

This rule complies with the requirements of E.O. 12988. Specifically, this rule:

- (a) Does not unduly burden the judicial system.
- (b) Meets the criteria of section 3(a) requiring that all regulations be reviewed to eliminate errors and ambiguity and be written to minimize litigation; and
- (c) Meets the criteria of section 3(b)(2) requiring that all regulations be written in clear language and contain clear legal standards.

H. E.O. 13175, Consultation with Indian Tribes

In accordance with Executive Order 13175, OPM has evaluated this rule and determined that it has no tribal implications.

I. Paperwork Reduction Act

This document does not contain proposed information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13.

List of Subjects in 5 CFR Part 185

Program Fraud Civil Remedies, Claims, Penalties, Basis for Civil Penalties and Assessments.

Office of Personnel Management.

Alexys Stanley,
Regulatory Affairs Analyst.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, OPM amends part 185 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 185—PROGRAM FRAUD CIVIL REMEDIES: CIVIL MONETARY PENALTY INFLATION ADJUSTMENT

1. The authority citation for part 185 continues to read:

Authority: 28 U.S.C. 2461 note; 31 U.S.C. 3801-3812.

§ 185.103 [Amended]

2. Section 185.103 is amended in paragraphs (a) introductory text and (f)(2) by revising “\$11,665” to read “\$12,537”.

BILLING CODE 6325-48-P

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